

AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS:

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions and listings of claims in the application:

1. (Previously Presented) A method for facilitating electronic business transactions between a providing entity and a purchasing entity, comprising:
providing, by the providing entity, an invoice including a plurality of entries, each entry associated with a type of item; and
performing a business process by a server, the business process including:
for each entry,
 - (i) determining an individual with authority to approve the entry based on the associated item type,
 - (ii) making the entry available to the determined individual, and
 - (iii) receiving an indication from the determined individual reflecting a decision on whether to approve the entry,wherein entries that the individual does not have authority to approve are not made available to the individual.

2. (Original) The method of claim 1, wherein each associated item type identifies a respective purchasing entity, and wherein determining an individual with authority to approve the entry based on the associated item type includes:
determining an association between an individual and a respective purchasing entity identified by the entry type; and

determining an individual with authority to approve the entry based on the determined association.

3. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 1, wherein the business process further includes:

for each entry,

(iv) determining a second individual with authority to approve the decision reflected by the received indication;

(v) making the entry and indication available to the second individual; and

(vi) receiving a second indication from the second individual reflecting a second decision concerning the entry.

4. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 1, wherein a second individual is authorized to approve each entry included in the invoice, and wherein the method further comprises:

making each entry included in the invoice available to the second individual for further approval after receipt of an indication reflecting an approval or dispute of the entry.

5. (Previously Presented) A method for facilitating electronic business transactions between a purchasing entity and a providing entity, comprising:

providing by a first computer system associated with the providing entity an invoice including a plurality of entries;

determining by a second computer system a value of the invoice; and
automatically approving, by the second computer system for the purchasing
entity, all of the entries included in the invoice based on the determined value.

6. (Previously Presented) A method for facilitating electronic business
transactions, comprising:

providing by a providing system an invoice including a plurality of entries, each
entry associated with a type of item; and

performing a business process by a server, the business process including:

determining a value of each entry included in the invoice;

identifying for each entry an approver with authority to approve the entry
based on the associated item type;

automatically approving one or more entries included in the invoice based
on the determined value of each approved entry; and

making one or more entries available to a corresponding approver based
on the available one or more entries' determined value, wherein each entry that
is made available excludes entries that the corresponding authorized approver
does not have the authority to approve.

7. (Previously Presented) The method of 6, wherein the business process
further includes:

receiving an indication from each corresponding approver reflecting a decision on whether to approve each entry that the corresponding approver has the authority to approve.

8. (Original) The method of claim 6, wherein automatically approving one or more entries included in the invoice based on the approved entries' determined value includes:

automatically approving each entry included in the invoice that has a determined value below a predetermined value.

9. (Original) The method of claim 6, wherein making one or more entries available to a corresponding approver based on the available one or more entries' determined value includes:

making each entry that has a determined value above a predetermined value available to a corresponding authorized approver.

10. (Previously Presented) A method for facilitating business transactions between a providing entity and a purchasing entity, comprising:

providing, by the providing entity, an invoice including a plurality of items; and
performing, by a server, a business process including:

determining, for each item included in the invoice, a corresponding approver with authority to approve the item; and

facilitating a review process for each item based on the determination,
wherein the review process is defined by the purchasing entity.

11. (Original) The method of claim 10, wherein the review process includes:
making information on each item available to the corresponding approver,
wherein each item that is made available excludes items that the corresponding
approver does not have the authority to approve; and
receiving an indication from each corresponding approver reflecting a decision on
whether to approve items that have been made available to the corresponding
determined approver.

12. (Original) The method of claim 10, wherein the review process includes:
automatically approving each item included in the invoice based on a value of the
invoice.

13. (Original) The method of claim 10, wherein the review process includes:
automatically approving each item included in the invoice based on a value of the
item.

14. (Original) The method of claim 10, wherein the review process includes:
receiving an indication of a delegated approver with authority to approve one or
more items included in the invoice; and

making the one or more items available to the delegated approver, wherein the one or more items that are made available excludes items that the delegated approver does not have the authority to approve.

15. (Previously Presented) A method for facilitating business transactions, the method performed by a computer system comprising:

receiving from a remote computing system information reflecting an invoice with a plurality of items; and

directing individual items to respective approvers such that each respective approver receives only items that the respective approver is authorized to review.

16. (Previously Presented) A method for facilitating business transactions between a providing entity and a purchasing entity, the method performed by a first computing system associated with the providing entity comprising:

requesting access to invoice information managed by a second computing system and associated with an invoice including a plurality of items;

accessing the invoice information that includes information on only items included in the invoice that are authorized for review; and

generating an indication reflecting a decision on whether to approve each authorized item.

17. (Original) The method of claim 16, wherein the invoice information is reflected in an in-box, and requesting access to the invoice information includes:

requesting access to the in-box in response to an indication of the availability of the invoice information reflected in the in-box.

18. (Original) The method of claim 16, wherein the invoice information is reflected in an in-box, and wherein accessing the invoice information includes:
accessing the in-box.

19. (Original) The method of claim 16, wherein the invoice information is reflected in an in-box, and generating an indication includes:
generating the indication by receiving selections on whether to approve each authorized item reflected in the in-box.

20. (Currently Amended) A method for facilitating electronic business transactions between a providing entity and a purchasing entity, the method performed by a computing system comprising:

electronically receiving profile information associated with a user;
electronically receiving an indication reflecting the assignment of the user's approver status based on the profile information;
electronically assigning an entity identifier to the user based on the approver status, wherein the identifier indicates an entity within the providing entity that purchases items from the purchasing entity; and
electronically assigning the user as an approver with the authority to approve the purchases reflected in entries included in an invoice provided by the providing entity.

21. (Currently Amended) A method for facilitating electronic business transactions in a system including a purchasing entity that includes one or more sub-entities, and a providing entity, the method performed by a first computing system comprising:

electronically receiving a notification that an invoice including one or more line items has been provided by the providing entity;

electronically requesting access to information associated with the invoice;

receiving line item information associated with selected line items of the one or more line items included in the invoice;

electronically performing a dispute/approval process on the line item information;

and

electronically generating an indication reflecting results of the dispute/approval process.

22. (Original) The method of claim 21, wherein an approver is associated with each sub-entity of the purchasing entity, and the notification is directed to approvers who are associated with sub-entities that are indicated in line items included in the invoice, and wherein requesting access to information includes:

generating, by each approver that has received a notification, a request to access information associated with the invoice.

23. (Original) The method of claim 22, wherein receiving line item information associated with selected line items of the one or more line items includes:

providing line item information to respective approvers based on the authority of the respective approvers to approve the selected line items included in the invoice, wherein each respective approver is not presented with line item information associated with line items the respective approver is not authorized to approve.

24. (Original) The method of claim 21, wherein performing a dispute/approval process on the line item information includes:

receiving an indication reflecting a dispute or approval of each selected line item.

25. (Original) The method of claim 21, wherein performing a dispute/approval process on the line item information includes:

receiving an indication reflecting a dispute of a set of the selected line items; and

receiving a second indication reflecting an approval of a second set of the selected line items.

26. (Original) A system for facilitating electronic business transactions, comprising:

a providing entity for providing one or more invoices associated with one or more purchasing entities, wherein the one or more invoices each include one or more line items; and

a server for receiving the one or more invoices from the providing entity, determining an approver for each line item included in the one or more invoices, making available line item data associated with each one of the one or more line items to the approver(s), wherein each one of the approvers has viewing access restricted to line item data associated with line items that they authorized to review.

27. (Original) The system of claim 26, wherein the server determines an approver for each line item included in the one or more invoices based on one or more approver hierarchies that associate approvers with sub-entities corresponding to the one or more purchasing entities.

28. (Original) The system of claim 27, wherein each of the one or more providing entities are associated with a separate approver hierarchy that indicates approvers that are associated with sub-entities within each respective providing entity.

29. (Original) The system of claim 26, wherein the server consists of one or more servers.

30. (Original) The system of claim 26, wherein the server is configured to receive a request from each approver to access information associated with one or more line items that the approver is authorized to review, and makes available the information to the approver in response to the request.

31. (Currently Amended) A method for facilitating business transactions between a providing entity and a purchasing entity, the method performed by a computing system comprising:

electronically providing, by the providing entity, an invoice including a plurality of items; and

electronically determining, for each item included in the invoice, a corresponding approver with authority to approve the item.

32. (Currently Amended) A computer-implemented method for facilitating dispute handling for invoices reflecting purchases of goods and services, the method performed by a server system comprising:

electronically storing data representing an invoice with a plurality of line items;

electronically permitting access to at least a portion of the data by an individual authorized to review a set of line items selected from the plurality of line items based on stored profile data associated with the individual; and

electronically receiving decision data reflecting a decision by the authorized individual to dispute one of the selected line items.

33. (Original) The computer-implemented method of claim 32, wherein the stored profile data reflects the individual's authority to review the set of line items.

34. (Original) The computer-implemented method of claim 32, wherein the set of line items were reviewed by a second individual and the stored profile data reflects the individual's authority to review the set of line items.

35. (Original) The computer-implemented method of claim 32, further comprising:

permitting access to the disputed selected line item by a second individual authorized to review the set of line items.

36. (Original) The computer-implemented method of claim 32, wherein permitting access includes:

excluding access to the portion of the data by a second individual authorized to review a second set of line items selected from the plurality of line items based on stored profile data associated with the second individual.

37. (Previously Presented) A computer-readable medium including instructions for performing a method, when executed by a processor, for facilitating electronic business transactions, the method comprising:

providing, by the providing entity, an invoice including a plurality of entries, each entry associated with a type of item; and

performing a business process by a server, the business process including:

for each entry,

(i) determining an individual with authority to approve the entry based on the associated item type,

(ii) making the entry available to the determined individual, and

(iii) receiving an indication from the determined individual reflecting a decision on whether to approve the entry,

wherein entries that the individual does not have authority to approve are not made available to the individual.

38. (Original) The computer-readable medium of claim 37, wherein each associated item type identifies a respective purchasing entity, and wherein determining an individual with authority to approve the entry based on the associated item type includes:

determining an association between an individual and a respective purchasing entity identified by the entry type; and

determining an individual with authority to approve the entry based on the determined association.

39. (Currently Amended) The computer-readable medium of claim 37, wherein ~~the~~ the business process further comprises:

for each entry,

(iv) determining a second individual with authority to approve the decision reflected by the received indication;

(v) making the entry and indication available to the second individual; and

(vi) receiving a second indication from the second individual reflecting a second decision concerning the entry.

40. (Currently Amended) The computer-readable medium of claim 37, wherein a second individual is authorized to approve each entry included in the invoice, and wherein ~~the~~ the business process further comprises:

making each entry included in the invoice available to a second individual for further approval after receipt of an indication reflecting an approval or dispute or the entry.

41. (Previously Presented) A computer-readable medium including instructions for performing a method, when executed by a processor, for facilitating electronic business transactions, the method comprising:

providing₁ by a first computing system, an invoice including a plurality of entries;
determining, by a second computing system, a value of the invoice; and
automatically approving, by the second computing system, all of the entries included in the invoice based on the determined value.

42. (Previously Presented) A computer-readable medium including instructions for performing a method, when executed by a processor, for facilitating electronic business transactions, comprising:

providing₁ by a first computing system, an invoice including a plurality of entries, each entry associated with a type of item; and

performing a business process by a second computing system, the business process including:

determining a value of each entry included in the invoice;

identifying for each entry an approver with authority to approve the entry based on the associated item type;

automatically approving one or more entries included in the invoice based on the determined value of each approved entry; and

making one or more entries available to a corresponding approver based on the available one or more entries' determined value, wherein each entry that is made available excludes entries that the corresponding authorized approver does not have the authority to approve.

43. (Currently Amended) The computer-readable medium of 42, wherein ~~the~~ the business process further comprises:

receiving an indication from each corresponding approver reflecting a decision on whether to approve each entry that the corresponding approver has the authority to approve.

44. (Original) The computer-readable medium of claim 42, wherein automatically approving one or more entries included in the invoice based on the approved entries' determined value includes:

automatically approving each entry included in the invoice that has a determined value below a predetermined value.

45. (Original) The computer-readable medium of claim 42, wherein making one or more entries available to a corresponding approver based on the available one or more entries' determined value includes:

making each entry that has a determined value above a predetermined value available to a corresponding authorized approver.

46. (Previously Presented) A computer-readable medium including instructions for performing a method, when executed by a processor, for facilitating business transactions between a providing entity and a purchasing entity, comprising:

providing, by the providing entity, an invoice including a plurality of items;
determining by a server system, for each item included in the invoice, a corresponding approver with authority to approve the item; and
facilitating a review process by the server for each item based on the determination, wherein the review process is defined by the purchasing entity.

47. (Original) The computer-readable medium of claim 46, wherein the review process includes:

making information on each item available to the corresponding approver, wherein each item that is made available excludes items that the corresponding approver does not have the authority to approve; and

receiving an indication from each corresponding approver reflecting a decision on whether to approve items that have been made available to the corresponding determined approver.

48. (Original) The computer-readable medium of claim 46, wherein the review process includes:

automatically approving each item included in the invoice based on a value of the invoice.

49. (Original) The computer-readable medium of claim 46, wherein the review process includes:

automatically approving each item included in the invoice based on a value of the item.

50. (Original) The computer-readable medium of claim 46, wherein the review process includes:

receiving an indication of a delegated approver with authority to approve one or more items included in the invoice; and

making the one or more items available to the delegated approver, wherein the one or more items that are made available excludes items that the delegated approver does not have the authority to approve.

51. (Previously Presented) A computer-readable medium including instructions for performing a method, when executed by a processor, for facilitating business transactions, the method comprising:

receiving, from a first computing system, information reflecting an invoice with a plurality of items; and

directing, by a second computing system, individual items to respective approvers such that each respective approver receives only items that the respective approver is authorized to review.

52. (Previously Presented) A computer-readable medium including instructions for performing a method, when executed by a processor, for facilitating business transactions, comprising:

requesting, by a computing system, access to invoice information associated with an invoice including a plurality of items;

accessing, by the computing system, the invoice information that includes information on only items included in the invoice that are authorized for review; and

generating, by the computing system an indication reflecting a decision one whether to approve each authorized item.

53. (Original) The computer-readable medium of claim 52, wherein the invoice information is reflected in an in-box, and requesting access to the invoice information includes:

requesting access to the in-box in response to an indication of the availability of the invoice information reflected in the in-box.

54. (Original) The computer-readable medium of claim 52, wherein the invoice information is reflected in an in-box, and wherein accessing the invoice information includes:

accessing the in-box.

55. (Original) The computer-readable medium of claim 52, wherein the invoice information is reflected in an in-box, and generating an indication includes:

generating the indication by receiving selections on whether to approve each authorized item reflected in the in-box.

56. (Previously Presented) A computer-readable medium including instructions for performing a method, when executed by a processor, for facilitating electronic business transactions, comprising:

receiving, by a server system, profile information associated with a user;

receiving, by the server system, an indication reflecting the assignment of the user's approver status based on the profile information;

assigning, by the server system, an entity identifier to the user based on the approver status, wherein the identifier indicates an entity within a providing entity that purchases items from a purchasing entity; and

assigning, by the server system, the user as an approver with the authority to approve the purchases reflected in entries included in an invoice provided by the providing entity.

57. (Previously Presented) A computer-readable medium including instructions for performing a method, when executed by a processor, for facilitating electronic business transactions in a system including a purchasing entity that includes one or more sub-entities, and a providing entity, the method comprising:

receiving, by a computer system, a notification that an invoice including one or more line items has been provided by the providing entity;

requesting, by the computer system, access to information associated with the invoice;

receiving, by the computer system, line item information associated with selected line items of the one or more line items included in the invoice;

performing, by a second computer system, a dispute/approval process on the line item information; and

generating, by the second computer system, an indication reflecting results of the dispute/approval process.

58. (Original) The computer-readable medium of claim 57, wherein an approver is associated with each sub-entity of the purchasing entity, and the notification is directed to approvers who are associated with sub-entities that are indicated in line items included in the invoice, and wherein requesting access to information includes:

generating, by each approver that has received a notification, a request to access information associated with the invoice.

59. (Previously Presented) The computer-readable medium of claim 58, wherein receiving line item information associated with selected line items of the one or more line items includes:

providing, by the second computer system, line item information to respective approvers based on the authority of the respective approvers to approve the selected line items included in the invoice, wherein each respective approver is not presented with line item information associated with line items the respective approver is not authorized to approve.

60. (Original) The computer-readable medium of claim 57, wherein performing a dispute/approval process on the line item information includes:

receiving an indication reflecting a dispute or approval of each selected line item.

61. (Original) The computer-readable medium of claim 57, wherein performing a dispute/approval process on the line item information includes:

receiving an indication reflecting a dispute of a set of the selected line items; and

receiving a second indication reflecting an approval of a second set of the selected line items.

62. (Original) A system for facilitating electronic business transactions, comprising:

means for providing an invoice including a plurality of entries, each entry associated with a type of item;

means for determining, for each entry, an individual with authority to approve the entry based on the associated item type;

means for making each entry available to the determined individual; and

means for receiving, for each entry, an indication from the determined individual reflecting a decision on whether to approve the entry,

wherein entries that the individual does not have authority to approve are not made available to the individual.

63. (Original) The system of claim 62, wherein each associated item type identifies a respective purchasing entity, and wherein the means for determining an individual with authority to approve the entry based on the associated item type includes:

means for determining an association between an individual and a respective purchasing entity identified by the entry type; and

means for determining an individual with authority to approve the entry based on the determined association.

64. (Original) The system of claim 62, further comprising:

means for determining, for each entry, a second individual with authority to approve the decision reflected by the received indication;

means for making each entry and indication available to the second individual;
and

means for receiving a second indication from the second individual reflecting a second decision concerning the entry.

65. (Original) The system of claim 62, wherein a second individual is authorized to approve each entry included in the invoice, and wherein the system further comprises:

means for making each entry included in the invoice available to a second individual for further approval after receipt of an indication reflecting an approval or dispute of the entry.

66. (Original) A system for facilitating electronic business transactions, comprising:

means for providing an invoice including a plurality of entries;
means for determining a value of the invoice; and
means for automatically approving all of the entries included in the invoice based on the determined value.

67. (Original) A system for facilitating electronic business transactions, comprising:

means for providing an invoice including a plurality of entries, each entry associated with a type of item;

means for determining a value of each entry included in the invoice;

means for identifying for each entry an approver with authority to approve the entry based on the associated item type;

means for automatically approving one or more entries included in the invoice based on the determined value of each approved entry; and

means for making one or more entries available to a corresponding approver based on the available one or more entries' determined value, wherein each entry that is made available excludes entries that the corresponding authorized approver does not have the authority to approve.

68. (Original) The system of 67, further comprising:

means for receiving an indication from each corresponding approver reflecting a decision on whether to approve each entry that the corresponding approver has the authority to approve.

69. (Original) The system of claim 68, wherein the means for automatically approving one or more entries included in the invoice based on the approved entries' determined value includes:

means for automatically approving each entry included in the invoice that has a determined value below a predetermined value.

70. (Original) The system of claim 67, wherein the means for making one or more entries available to a corresponding approver based on the available one or more entries' determined value includes:

means for making each entry that has a determined value above a predetermined value available to a corresponding authorized approver.

71. (Original) A system for facilitating business transactions between a providing entity and a purchasing entity, comprising:

means for providing, by the providing entity, an invoice including a plurality of items;

means for determining, for each item included in the invoice, a corresponding approver with authority to approve the item; and

means for facilitating a review process for each item based on the determination, wherein the review process is defined by the purchasing entity.

72. (Original) The system of claim 71, wherein the means for facilitating a review process includes:

means for making information on each item available to the corresponding approver, wherein each item that is made available excludes items that the corresponding approver does not have the authority to approve; and

means for receiving an indication from each corresponding approver reflecting a decision on whether to approve items that have been made available to the corresponding determined approver.

73. (Original) The system of claim 71, wherein the means for facilitating a review process includes:

means for automatically approving each item included in the invoice based on a value of the invoice.

74. (Original) The system of claim 71, wherein the means for facilitating a review process includes:

means for automatically approving each item included in the invoice based on a value of the item.

75. (Original) The system of claim 71, wherein the means for facilitating a review process includes:

means for receiving an indication of a delegated approver with authority to approve one or more items included in the invoice; and

means for making the one or more items available to the delegated approver, wherein the one or more items that are made available excludes items that the delegated approver does not have the authority to approve.

76. (Original) A system for facilitating business transactions, comprising:

means for receiving information reflecting an invoice with a plurality of items; and

means for directing individual items to respective approvers such that each respective approver receives only items that the respective approver is authorized to review.

77. (Original) A system for facilitating business transactions, comprising:
means for requesting access to invoice information associated with an invoice including a plurality of items;

means for accessing the invoice information that includes information on only items included in the invoice that are authorized for review; and

means for generating an indication reflecting a decision one whether to approve each authorized item.

78. (Original) The system of claim 77, wherein the invoice information is reflected in an in-box, and the means for requesting access to the invoice information includes:

means for requesting access to the in-box in response to an indication of the availability of the invoice information reflected in the in-box.

79. (Original) The system of claim 77, wherein the invoice information is reflected in an in-box, and wherein the means for accessing the invoice information includes:

means for accessing the in-box.

80. (Original) The system of claim 77, wherein the invoice information is reflected in an in-box, and the means for generating an indication includes:

means for generating the indication by receiving selections on whether to approve each authorized item reflected in the in-box.

81. (Original) A system for facilitating electronic business transactions, comprising:

means for receiving profile information associated with a user;

means for receiving an indication reflecting the assignment of the user's approver status based on the profile information;

means for assigning an entity identifier to the user based on the approver status, wherein the identifier indicates an entity within a providing entity that purchases items from a purchasing entity; and

means for assigning the user as an approver with the authority to approve the purchases reflected in entries included in an invoice provided by the providing entity.

82. (Original) A system for facilitating electronic business transactions in a system including a purchasing entity that includes one or more sub-entities, and a providing entity, the system comprising:

means for receiving a notification that an invoice including one or more line items has been provided by the providing entity;

means for requesting access to information associated with the invoice;

means for receiving line item information associated with selected line items of the one or more line items included in the invoice;

means for performing a dispute/approval process on the line item information;
and

means for generating an indication reflecting results of the dispute/approval process.

83. (Original) The means for of claim 82, wherein an approver is associated with each sub-entity of the purchasing entity, and the notification is directed to approvers who are associated with sub-entities that are indicated in line items included in the invoice, and wherein the means for requesting access to information includes:

means for generating, by each approver that has received a notification, a request to access information associated with the invoice.

84. (Original) The system of claim 83, wherein the means for receiving line item information associated with selected line items of the one or more line items includes:

means for providing line item information to respective approvers based on the authority of the respective approvers to approve the selected line items included in the invoice, wherein each respective approver is not presented with line item information associated with line items the respective approver is not authorized to approve.

85. (Original) The system of claim 82, wherein the means for performing a dispute/approval process on the line item information includes:

means for receiving an indication reflecting a dispute or approval of each selected line item.

86. (Original) The system of claim 82, wherein the means for performing a dispute/approval process on the line item information includes:

means for receiving an indication reflecting a dispute of a set of the selected line items; and

means for receiving a second indication reflecting an approval of a second set of the selected line items.

REMARKS

In the last Office Action, the Examiner rejected claims 20-25 and 31-36 under 35 U.S.C. § 101; rejected claims 1, 2, 5-38, 41-63, and 66-86 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as unpatentable over Anderson et al. (U.S. Patent No. 6,058,380) in view of Guzelsu (U.S. Patent No. 6,381,587); and rejected claims 3, 4, 39, 40, 64 and 65 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as unpatentable over Anderson et al. (U.S. Patent No. 6,058,380) and Guzelsu (U.S. Patent No. 6,381,587) in view of Bissonette et al. (U.S. Patent No. 6,343,279) .

By this amendment, Applicants propose amending claims 20, 21, 31, and 32, to add the word "electronically", and claims 39, 40, and 43 to eliminate some typographical errors. Claims 1-86 are pending.